

CLAIMS

The invention is claimed as follows:

1. A self-scanning checkout providing point of purchase products comprising:
 - 5 a scanner to scan items selected by a consumer;
 - a video monitor to display the cost of items scanned by the consumer;
 - a packaging area for placing items scanned by the consumer into a container;
 - and
 - 10 a dispenser for dispensing a point of purchase product, wherein the video monitor displays the cost of the product dispensed by the dispenser.
2. The self-scanning checkout of Claim 1, wherein the dispenser dispenses the product into the container.
- 15 3. The self-scanning checkout of Claim 1, wherein the dispenser dispenses the product adjacent to the scanner.
4. The self-scanning checkout of Claim 1, wherein the dispenser dispenses the product adjacent to a device selected from the group consisting of: the video monitor,
 - 20 a change maker that makes change from payments for items and products purchased and a receipt printer that provides a receipt for items and products purchased.
5. An automated checkout device comprising:
 - 25 a surface for allowing a customer to place a plurality of items to be purchased;
 - a scanner for allowing the customer to accumulate a cost for the items;
 - a second surface to support the items after they are scanned;
 - a point of purchase device that dispenses a point of purchase product onto the second surface upon request of the consumer; and
 - the cost of the point of purchase product is added to the cost of the plurality of items automatically.
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6. The automated checkout device of Claim 5, wherein the second surface supports a container for receiving the items.

7. The automated checkout device of Claim 6, wherein the container is a bag.

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8. The automated checkout device of Claim 7, wherein the point of purchase product is dispensed into the bag.

9. A device allowing a consumer to purchase product without the need for a
10 cashier comprising:

a body having an interior;

a controller coupled to the body;

a scanning device that communicates with and is coupled to the controller, the scanning device allowing a consumer to scan purchasable items that the consumer
15 brings to the device and accumulate a cost for the items;

a product maintained within the interior of the body; and

the body including a dispenser that dispenses the product from the body upon a request for product by the consumer, wherein a cost for the product is added to the cost for the items.

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10. The device of Claim 9, wherein the controller is integral with the body.

11. The device of Claim 9, wherein the controller is coupled to the body by a mode selected from the group consisting of: electrical coupling, optical coupling and
25 coupling via a radio frequency signal.

12. The device of Claim 9, wherein the scanning device is coupled to the controller by a mode selected from the group consisting of: electrical coupling, optical coupling and coupling via a radio frequency signal.

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13. The device of Claim 9, wherein the dispenser dispenses the product in a direction selected from the group consisting of: vertically upward, vertically downward and laterally.

5 14. The device of Claim 9, wherein the scanning device is integral with the controller.

15. The purchasing device of Claim 9, which includes a display that prompts the consumer to purchase the product.

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16. The purchasing device of Claim 9, wherein the body includes a plurality of different products.

17. The purchasing device of Claim 16, wherein the plurality of different products
15 are selected from the group consisting of: confectionery products, periodicals, cigarette lighters, batteries, key chains, film, writing instruments, toiletries and toys.

18. A point of purchase device that operates with an automated purchasing device having a controller that allows a consumer to input purchasable items and accumulate
20 a cost for the items, the point of purchase device comprising:

a body housing a product and including a member for coupling the point of purchase device to the automated purchasing device; and

a dispenser that dispenses the product from the body upon request by the consumer, wherein a cost for the product is added to the cost for the items.

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19. The point of purchase device of Claim 18, wherein the body houses a plurality of different products.

20. The point of purchase device of Claim 19, wherein the plurality of different
30 products are selected from the group consisting of: confectionery products, periodicals, cigarette lighters, batteries, key chains, writing instruments, film, toiletries and toys.

21. The point of purchase device of Claim 18, wherein the body is modular and physically independent from the automated purchasing device.

5 22. The point of purchase device of Claim 18, wherein the member couples the body to the automated purchasing device by a mode selected from the group consisting of: electrical coupling, optical coupling and coupling via a radio frequency signal.

10 23. A point of purchase device that operates with an automated purchasing device that allows a consumer to purchase items without the need for a cashier, accumulating a cost for the items and allowing the consumer to pay for a product, the point of purchase device comprising:

- a body housing the product;
- a controller coupled to the body; and

15 24. A dispenser that dispenses the product from the body upon a signal from the controller, the signal initiated by the consumer, wherein a cost for the product is added to the cost for the items.

20 25. The point of purchase device of Claim 23, wherein the body is modular and physically independent from the automated purchasing device.

25 26. The point of purchase device of Claim 23, which includes a display that communicates with the controller and prompts the consumer to purchase the product.

30 27. A point of purchase device that is coupled to a device that allows a retail operator to input purchasable items and accumulate a cost for the purchasable items comprising:

28. A dispenser that dispenses a product from a stock upon a signal from a controller that is coupled to the retail operator controlled device, the signal initiated by the retail operator, wherein a cost for the product is automatically added to the cost of the purchasable items by the controller.

27. The point of purchase device of Claim 26, wherein the device is chosen from the group consisting of: a scanner, a cash register, a point of purchase kiosk and a touch screen.

5 28. The point of purchase device of Claim 26, wherein the controller is coupled to the device by a mode selected from the group consisting of: electrical coupling, optical coupling and coupling via a radio frequency signal.

29. The point of purchase device of Claim 26, wherein the controller is integral
10 with the device.

30. A point of purchase device that operates with an automated purchasing device that allows a retail operator to input purchasable items and accumulate a cost for the purchasable items, the point of purchase device comprising:

15 a body housing a stock of product;
a controller maintained within the body; and
a dispenser within the body that dispenses a product from the stock upon a signal from the controller, the signal initiated by the retail operator, wherein a cost for the product is automatically added to the cost for the purchasable items by the
20 controller.

31. The point of purchase device of Claim 30, wherein the automated purchasing device is selected from the group consisting of: a scanner and a cash register.

25 32. The point of purchase device of Claim 30, including a display that communicates with the controller and prompts the consumer to purchase the product.

33. The point of purchase device of Claim 30, wherein the body is modular and physically independent from the automated purchasing device.

34. A point of purchase device that operates with a credit/debit card verification device that authorizes a cost for items purchased by a consumer, the point of purchase device comprising:

a controller that communicates with the credit/debit card verification device;

5 and

the controller is coupled to a dispenser that dispenses a product upon a signal to the controller, the signal initiated by the consumer through the credit/debit card verification device, wherein a cost for the consumable product is added to the cost for the items purchased by the consumer.

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35. The point of purchase device of Claim 34, wherein the credit/debit card verification device is located at a retail checkout line.

36. The point of purchase device of Claim 34, wherein the stock includes a
15 plurality of different products and the controller communicates a selected product to the dispenser.

37. The point of purchase device of Claim 34, wherein the controller is electrically coupled to the dispenser.

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38. A point of purchase device comprising:

a body housing a stock of product that is physically coupled to a discrete automated purchasing device that allows consumers to automatically purchase items that are physically brought to the automated purchasing device;

25 a money acceptor coupled to the body; and

a dispenser within the body that dispenses a product from the stock upon a consumer's input of a predefined amount of money into the money acceptor.

39. The point of purchase device of Claim 38, wherein the automated purchasing
30 device is selected from the group consisting of: a scanner, a cash register and a self-scanning checkout.

40. The point of purchase device of Claim 38, wherein the automated purchasing device is located at a retail outlet selected from the group consisting of: a retail checkout, a restaurant cash register and an electronic ticketing station.

5 41. The point of purchase device of Claim 38, wherein the money acceptor is selected from the group consisting of: a cash acceptor, a coin acceptor and a credit/debit card acceptor.

42. A device for dispensing consumable and non-consumable products at the same
10 location comprising:

a body;
a stock of a consumable product housed within the body;
a stock of a non-consumable products housed within the body;
a dispenser that dispenses the consumable product;
15 a device that totals purchase prices for consumable and non-consumable products; and
a payment acceptor that allows the consumer to make a single payment for the consumable and non-consumable products.

20 43. The device of Claim 42, wherein the non-consumable product is selected from the group consisting of: movie tickets, plane tickets, periodicals, video tapes, compact disks, digital video disks and newspapers.

44. A method of operating an automated checkout comprising:
25 allowing a consumer to bring purchasable items to an automated checkout device;
allowing the consumer to scan the purchasable items and accumulate a cost for the scanned items on a display;
allowing the consumer to select a product from a dispensing device located in
30 juxtaposition to the automated checkout;
automatically dispensing the product from the dispensing device in response to the consumer's selection; and

automatically adding a cost of the product to the cost for the scanned items on the display.

45. The method of Claim 44, wherein the consumer selects the product by using a
5 touch screen.

46. The method of Claim 44, including the step of allowing the consumer to pay for the product by credit/debit card.

10 47. The method of Claim 44, wherein adding the cost of the product includes automatically increasing a balance due on a credit/debit card transaction.

48. A method of operating a checkout station comprising:
allowing a consumer to bring purchasable items to a store operator;
15 allowing the operator to scan the purchasable items and accumulate a cost for the scanned items;
allowing the consumer to independently purchase a product by touching a screen coupled to a dispensing device;
dispensing the product from the dispensing device in response to the consumer
20 touching the screen; and
automatically adding a cost of the dispensed product to the cost for the scanned items.

49. A method of operating a checkout station comprising:
25 employing an operator to input purchasable items into a device and accumulate a cost for the purchasable items;
prompting a consumer to purchase a product from a dispensing device;
automatically dispensing the product from the dispensing device upon the consumer's request; and
30 automatically adding a cost of the product to the cost for the purchasable items.

50. A method for providing a point of purchase product without the need for a cashier comprising:

providing a checkout area for the consumer to bring items for purchase;

accumulating a cost associated with the items the consumer wants;

5 providing a product at the point of purchase;

prompting the consumer that other product is available at the point of purchase;

dispensing the product to the consumer at the point of purchase upon a request by the consumer to purchase the product; and

automatically, without need for a cashier, adding to the cost associated with

10 other items purchased any additional cost for the product.

51. The method of Claim 50, which includes accepting a single payment in exchange for the product and other purchased items.

15 52. The method of Claim 50, wherein the consumer is prompted that the product is available by an advertisement for the product.

53. The method of Claim 50, wherein prompting the consumer includes prompting the consumer at a time selected from the group consisting of: before the consumer 20 purchases the other consumable items, while the consumer is purchasing the other items and after the consumer purchases the other items.

54. The method of Claim 50, which includes allowing a retail operator to enter the consumer's approval to purchase the product.

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55. The method of Claim 50, which includes allowing the consumer to enter the approval to purchase the product.

56. A method for providing different products at a point-of purchase comprising:
30 stocking a plurality of different products at the point of purchase;
automatically prompting the consumer that the products are available at the point of purchase;

automatically accepting an approval by the consumer to purchase at least one of the products;

automatically dispensing the at least one the product to the consumer at the point of purchase; and

5 automatically adding to the cost of the product to the cost of any other items that are being purchased.

57. The method of Claim 56, wherein prompting the consumer that the products are available includes displaying a dynamic display selected from the group consisting
10 of: a display of the products, a message concerning the products, an advertisement concerning the products and a price reduction concerning the products.

58. The method of Claim 56, which includes allowing a retail operator to enter the consumer's approval to purchase the at least one product.

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59. The method of Claim 56, which includes allowing the consumer to enter the approval to purchase the at least one product.

60. A method for providing consumable and non-consumable products at the same
20 location comprising:

stocking consumable and non-consumable products in a single device;

allowing a consumer to purchase a consumable product from the single device without the need for a cashier;

25 allowing the consumer to purchase a non-consumable product from the single device without the need for a cashier;

dispensing the consumable and non-consumable product to the consumer at the same location in the device; and

allowing the consumer to pay for the consumable and non-consumable product without the need for money.

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61. The method of Claim 60, which includes allowing the consumer to pay for the consumable and non-consumable product at one time.

62. A method of generating revenue comprising:

providing a point of purchase device that is coupled to the retail purchasing device, the point of purchase device designed to dispense a product at the point of purchase; and

obtaining a fee paid from a supplier of the product in exchange for allowing the product to be dispensed from the point of purchase device.

63. The method of Claim 62, wherein the point of purchase device is integral with
10 the retail purchasing device.

64. The method of Claim 62, wherein the retail purchasing device is selected from the group consisting of: a self-scanning purchasing device, a fuel dispensing gasoline pump, a debit/credit card reader and a cash register.

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65. A method for purchasing items comprising the steps of:
transporting a plurality of items to a checkout station;
using a device that identifies costs for the items to create a purchase price for
the plurality of items;

20 prompting a consumer to purchase a point of purchase product;
dispensing from a dispenser the point of purchase product; and
automatically, without the need for a human operator, adding the cost of the
point of purchase product to the purchase price.

25 66. The method of Claim 65, wherein the cost of the point of purchase product is
added to the purchase price before the cost of all of the plurality of items is totaled.

67. The method of Claim 65, wherein the device that identifies costs is an optical
scanner.

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68. The method of Claim 65, wherein the point of purchase product is dispensed
from a device that is integral with the device that identifies costs.

69. A system for providing point of purchase products comprising:
a device for identifying costs of items and creating a purchase price for the
items;
5 means for prompting a consumer to purchase a point of purchase product; and
a device for dispensing the point of purchase product upon request from the
consumer and for adding a cost of the point of purchase product to the purchase price.

70. The system of Claim 69, wherein the means for prompting is selected from the
10 group consisting of: an advertisement, an audio prompt, a visual prompt and a tactile
prompt.

71. The system of Claim 69, wherein the device for identifying is a scanner.

15 72. The system of Claim 69, wherein the means for prompting is selected from the
group consisting of: a credit/debit card device; a display device separate from the
device for identifying costs and the dispensing device; and a speedpass.

73. The system of Claim 69, including a device for accepting payment for a total
20 purchase price including the cost of the point of purchase product and the purchase
price for the items.

74. The system of Claim 69, wherein the means for prompting is part of the device
and dispenser.

25 75. The system of Claim 69, wherein the purchase price for the items is a total
purchase price which occurs when the device for identifying has identified all of the
items.

30 76. A method for dispensing a point of purchase product comprising the steps of:
providing a purchasable item and a point of purchase product for sale to a retail
customer;

inputting a customer selection for the point of purchase product to a retail customer terminal proximate a point of purchase location for the purchasable item, the retail customer terminal adapted to process the customer selection for the point of purchase product and a customer selection for the purchasable item;

5 processing the customer selection for the point of purchase product for electrical communication with a point of purchase dispenser proximate the point of purchase location for the purchasable item; and

dispensing the point of purchase product to the customer from the point of purchase dispenser responsive to the electrical communication.

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77. A device for dispensing a retail item comprising:

a retail customer terminal sited proximate a point of purchase location, the retail customer terminal having an input device adapted to permit selection of a purchasable item and a point of purchase product;

15 a retail item processor in electrical communication with the retail customer terminal and adapted to process a selection of the purchasable item and the point of purchase product; and

a dispensing terminal sited proximate the point of purchase location and in electrical communication with the retail customer terminal and retail item processor,

20 the dispensing terminal adapted to handle and dispense the point of purchase product from a storage location to a dispensing location in response to the selection of the point of purchase product.

78. The device of Claim 77, wherein the dispensing terminal is further adapted to
25 handle and dispense at least one coin as change for the retail consumer.

79. A retail item dispensing device comprising:

a receptacle that houses and ejects a point of purchase product stored therein;

30 a dispensing location located proximate a point of purchase location for a purchasable item, said dispensing location comprising a surface configured for carrying the point of purchase product;

a customer selection input device adapted to input a customer selection of a purchasable item and point of purchase product and located proximate the point of purchase location for the purchasable item;

5 a retail item processor in electrical communication with the input device and
the receptacle that ejects the point of purchase product upon the customer selection;
and

 a dispensing device configured to deliver the point of purchase product ejected
from the receptacle to the dispensing location proximate the point of purchase location
for the purchasable item.

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80. A point of purchase device that is coupled to a device that inputs purchasable
items and accumulates a cost for the purchasable items comprising:

 a dispenser that dispenses a product, wherein a cost for the product is
automatically added to the cost of the purchasable items; and

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 a communication device that allows information relating to the product to be
communicated to a remote location.

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81. The point of purchase device of Claim 80, wherein the dispenser dispenses
products produced by a plurality of product suppliers and the communication device
allows for communication with the suppliers at a plurality of remote locations.

82. The point of purchase device of Claim 80, wherein the communication device
communicates over a wide area network with the remote location.

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83. The point of purchase device of Claim 80, wherein the communication device
communicates with the remote location by a mode selected from the group consisting
of: the Internet, a phone line, a satellite, microwaves and radio frequency.

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84. The point of purchase device of Claim 80, wherein a party receives inventory
information from the communication device.

85. The point of purchase device of Claim 80, including a controller for allowing the point of purchase device to receive advertisement information from a remote location.

5 86. A point of purchase device that is coupled to a device that inputs purchasable items and accumulates a cost for the purchasable items comprising:

a dispenser that dispenses a product, wherein a cost for the product is automatically added to the cost of the purchasable items; and

10 a display that shows an advertisement for the product, the advertisement being selected at a remote location and communicated to the point of purchase device.

87. The point of purchase device of Claim 86, including a plurality of advertisements that are stored and adapted to be shown on the display.

15 88. The point of purchase device of Claim 86, wherein the plurality of advertisements have varying costs.

89. The point of purchase device of Claim 86, wherein the advertisement is downloaded from a remote location by a mode selected from the group consisting of:
20 the Internet, a phone line, a satellite, microwaves and radio frequency.

90. A point of purchase device that is coupled to a device that inputs purchasable items and accumulates a cost for the purchasable items comprising:

25 a dispenser that dispenses a product, wherein a cost for the product is automatically added to the cost of the purchasable items; and

a communication device that communicates accumulated inventory information relating to the product to a remote location.

91. The point of purchase device of Claim 90, wherein the communication device
30 automatically communicates with a party selected from the group consisting of: a supplier of the product and a distributor of the product.

92. The point of purchase device of Claim 90, wherein the communication device automatically communicates inventory information selected from the group consisting of: inventory for the product reaching a predefined level, flow rates of the product and optimization data for the product.

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93. The point of purchase device of Claim 90, which includes an advertisement for the product which is automatically displayed based on an inventory level of the product.

10 94. A point of purchase device that is coupled to a device that inputs purchasable items and accumulates a cost for the purchasable items comprising:

a dispenser that dispenses a product, wherein a cost for the product is automatically added to the cost of the purchasable items; and

a smart prompt provided to a consumer based on at least one purchasable item

15 that the consumer has selected to purchase.

95. A point of purchase device that is coupled to a device that inputs purchasable items and accumulates a cost for the purchasable items comprising:

a dispenser that dispenses a product, wherein a cost for the product is

20 automatically added to the cost of the purchasable items; and

a smart prompt provided to a consumer based on a profile of the consumer.

96. The point of purchase device of Claim 95, wherein the profile is established via a customer card.

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97. The point of purchase device of Claim 95, wherein the profile is established via data collected by a controller of the point of purchase device.

98. A method for operating a point of purchase device that is coupled to a device 30 that inputs purchasable items and accumulates a cost for the items comprising:

using the point of purchase device to independently track inventory data for a product dispensed by the point of purchase device; and

communicating the level to a supplier of the product at a location remote from the purchasable item input device.

99. The method of Claim 98, wherein inventory data includes data selected from 5 the group consisting of: product flow rate data, inventory level data, flow rate data at a particular time of day, flow rate data at a particular time of year and data concerning a type of customer who purchases the product.

100. The method of Claim 98, which includes selecting an advertisement for the 10 product based on the inventory level.

101. A method for operating a point of purchase device that is coupled to a device that inputs purchasable items and accumulates a cost for the items comprising:
obtaining a profile for a consumer who has selected an item for purchase; and
15 providing a prompt to the consumer to purchase a product contained in the point of purchase device, wherein the prompt is based on the user profile.